

SIMPLIFIED ENGLISH GRAMMAR

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ENGLISH TENSES

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ENGLISH TENSES AND THEIRS ASPECTS

*The **Simplified Basic English Grammar** is an account of basic elements English Grammar and the way they are used in English. This pamphlet pays most attention on points that are importance to students of English language. Most of the contents were designed in simple language with examples for better understanding.*

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*Any errors, misspelling or wrong grammatical construction/arrangements found within this pamphlet, please feel free to contact the writer for immediate revamping at: **theladyachieve.blogpost.com**.*

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1. TENSES

The word *tense* was derived from an Old French *tens* which means *time*. Tense is the property of a verb that indicates the time in which the action described by the verb takes place. Tenses are verb forms that express the different times at which action takes place.

2. TYPES OF ENGLISH TENSES

English Tenses are primarily classified into 3 forms:

The present tense is most commonly used to indicate an action occurring in the present:

- a. **Present:** is a tense most commonly used to indicate an action occurring in the present, or suggests actions or situations at the time of speaking; e.g. *I am reading*.
- b. **Past:** is a tense expresses an action/actions that occurred sometime in the past; e.g. *I washed my clothes*.
- c. **Future:** this tense is used to indicate action that will occur in the future, this tense describes events that are not yet happened or are going to be happened in a future time; e.g. *I will marry you*

3. ASPECTS OF ENGLISH TENSES

Aspect is a grammatical category that expresses how an action, event, or state, denoted by a verb, extends over time. It is a grammatical category of verbs that consider qualities of action (structure [*how to make*] or use [*when and why to use*]). It is used to distinguish states and one action with another, for example, simple from continues, and perfect from perfect continues.

Basically in English language, there is four grammatical aspect used to differentiate different uses of tense. These aspects are:

1. Simple
2. Continues
3. Perfect
4. Perfect continues

- a. **Simple:** is a grammatical aspect a verb that denote a single action (perfective aspect), a habitual repeated action “*I loves reading books*” or relatively permanent state “*She died*” or a stative verbs “*He is a student*”.

In English, there are only two simple tenses that can be constructed without use of any auxiliary or modal verbs, **the simple present**, as in “*I walk*,” and **the simple past**, as in “*I walked*.” Use of helping verbs within these tenses are used for showing emphasis (emphatic statments), e.g. “*I (do) walk*”, or “*I (did) walk*”. While **the simple future** usually goes with modal auxiliaries (will, shall, can etc.) as in “*I will come to your office*”, “*You shall eat this food*”.

- b. **Progressive (Continuous):** an aspect used to denote a temporary action or state that began at a short previous time and continues into the present time. It expressed using a form of the auxiliary verb “*to be*” (*am, is* and *are* for present, *was* and *were* *past*, and *modal + be* for future) together with the **present participle** (*-ing* form);

Examples:

- *I am going to camp*
- *He was watching TV*
- *You will be working at home.*

- c. **Perfect:** describes a verb or verb aspect for an action that is brought to a close, it also used to denote the circumstance of an action’s being complete at a certain time, or not complete or temporarily. It is expressed using a form of the auxiliary verb “*have*” together with the **past participle** of the main verb;

Examples:

- *I have swum in pool*
- *They had slept in my room*
- *It will have killed them.*

- d. **Perfect Progressive/Continuous:** usually it refers to a completed portion of a continuing action or temporary. It is formed with verb “*have*” (denoting the perfect) together with “*been*” (the past participle of *be*, denoting the progressive) and present participle of the main verb;

Examples:

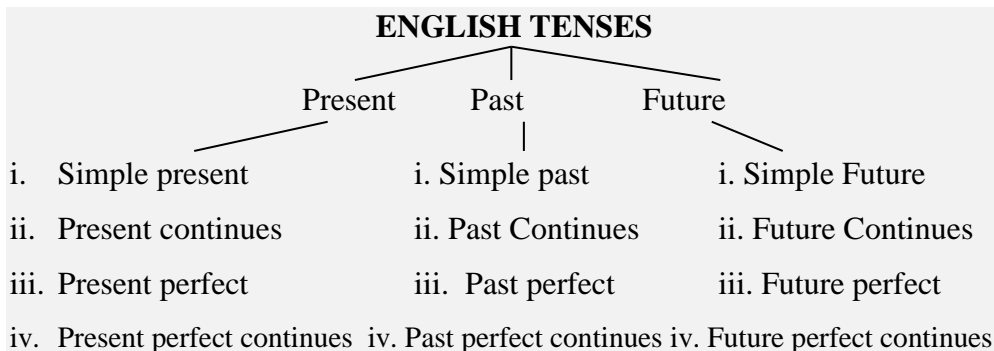
- *I have been reading for two hours*
- *They had been playing with toys*
- *You will have been travelling for two weeks.*

4. STATEMENTS:

Statement is a way or mood expression either as *declarative*, *negative* or *interrogative* statements for stating fact, experience, feeling and ideas.

- a. **Declarative Statement (+):** asserts or declares a fact or an opinion, it also called **Positive Statement**; e.g. *He teaches them English Grammar / She wrote a letter / I will buy a car*
- b. **Negative Statement (-):** is a statement that expresses denying, disproving or nullifying something, usually takes place with the addition of particle “*not*” to an auxiliary or copular verb; e.g. *I do not love him / He did not go to school / She will not attend the party*
- c. **Interrogative Statement (?):** is a statement uses to ask questions with a *question mark* (?) at the end of statement; e.g. *do you like this book / was it right? / will you arrive on time?*

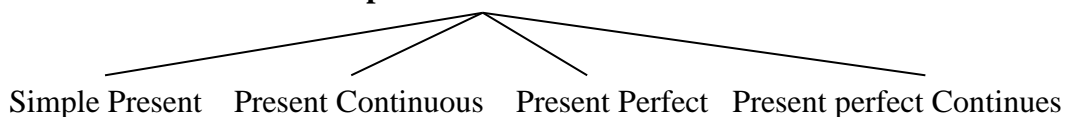
6. ENGLISH TENSES AND THEIR ASPECTS



i. PRESENT TENSE

The **present tense** is used to indicate an action occurring in the present time of speaking.

Aspects of the Present Tense



1. SIMPLE PRESENT TENSE

Simple present refers to an action or event that takes place habitually, stative or quoting someone/thing.

How do we make the Simple Present Tense?

subject + auxiliary verb + main verb
noun/pronoun do base

Three important exceptions about Simple Present

1. For positive sentences, we do not normally use the auxiliary
2. For 3rd person singular (e.g. **he, she** or **it**, or single noun [e.g. **Hafsat, a lecturer** etc.] ‘s’ should be added to the main verb e.g. “**goes**”, “**loves**” or ‘es’ to the auxiliary “**does**”.
3. For the verb ‘**to be**’ (stative verb), we do not use an auxiliary even for question and negatives “**he is my friend**”

Examples:

POSITIVE STATEMENT		
Subject	main verb	
I, you, we, they	read	a book
he, she, it	visit	a garden

NEGATIVE STATEMENT				
subject	auxiliary	negation particle	main verb	
I, you, we, they	do	not	like	PC
he, she, it	does	not	eat	meat

INTERROGATIVE STATEMENT

<i>auxiliary</i>	<i>subject</i>	<i>main verb</i>	
do	I, you, we, they	know	the man?
does	he, she, it	go	to the river?

▪ Examples of **STATIVE VERB**

POSITIVE STATEMENT

<i>subject</i>	<i>main verb</i>	
I	am	Nigerian
you, we, they	Are	Nigerian
he, she, it	Is	Nigerian

NEGATIVE STATEMENT

<i>Subject</i>	<i>main verb</i>		
I	am	not	Nigerian
you, we, they	are	not	Nigerian
he, she, it	is	not	Nigerian

INTERROGATIVE STATEMENT

<i>main verb</i>	<i>Subject</i>	
Am	I	Nigerian?
Are	you, we, they	Nigerian?
Is	he, she, it	Nigerian?

▪ Examples of **quoting someone's statement** (e.g. *direct speech*):

- The lecturer says: “*he is coming*”
- He says “*he is ready*”
- Terrorists say “no more attack”
- She says “*she loves him*”

ii. PRESENT CONTINUES TENSES

The ***present continues tense*** refers to an action or event conceived of as having limited duration, taking place at the present time (ie. happening now) or in future.

■ HOW DO WE MAKE THE PRESENT CONTINUOUS TENSE?

subject + **auxiliary verb** + **main verb**

noun/pro *be* *base + ing (present participle)*

POSITIVE STATEMENT

<i>Subject</i>	<i>auxiliary</i>	<i>main verb</i>	
I	am	reading	Books
you, we, they	are	writing	a note
he, she, it	is	eating	a food

NEGATIVE STATEMENT

<i>Subject</i>	<i>auxiliary</i>	<i>main verb</i>	
I	am	not playing	game
you, we, they	are	not riding	bike(s)
he, she, it	is	not staying	in home

INTERROGATIVE STATEMENT

<i>auxiliary</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>main verb</i>	
am	I	reading	books?
are	you, we, they	writing	a note?
is	he, she, it	eating	a food?

■ How do we spell the Present Continues Tense?

Present continuous tense forms by adding ***-ing*** to the base of verb's words as below:

BASIC

learn	>	learning	be	>	being	eat	>	eating
keep	>	keeping	watch	>	Watching	do	>	doing

Exception 1: If the base ends with **consonant + vowel + consonant**, double the last letter:

run	>	running	win	>	winning	cut	>	cutting
-----	---	---------	-----	---	---------	-----	---	---------

Exception 2: If the base verb ends with **'ie'**, change the **'ie'** to **'y'**:

lie	>	lying	die	>	dying	tie	>	tying
-----	---	-------	-----	---	-------	-----	---	-------

Exception 3: If the base verb ends with **vowel + consonant + e**, omit **'e'**:

come	>	coming	tape	>	taping	bare	>	baring
------	---	--------	------	---	--------	------	---	--------

▪ Contractions with the Present Continues Tense

When we use the present continues tense, we can contract the subject and auxiliary verb in speaking or in writing as:

I am	'am	we are	we're	it is	it's
he/she is	he's / she's	you are	you're	they are	they're

▪ Examples of Present-CT with Proper Nouns:

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| POSITIVE (+) | ▪ A'isha (she) <u>is</u> laughing at me |
| | ▪ Maryam and Safiya (they) <u>are</u> going to the school |
| | ▪ I and Khadija (we) <u>are</u> eating fruits (<i>we can omit <u>are</u></i>) |
| | ▪ My horse (it) <u>is</u> drinking water |
| NEGATIVE (-) | ▪ Balaraba <u>is</u> not writing her note |
| | ▪ Fatima <u>is</u> not washing her mom's clothes |
| | ▪ Hafsat and Sulaiman (they) <u>are</u> not cutting the grasses |
| INTER. (?) | ▪ <u>is</u> Ahmad reading the letter? |
| | ▪ <u>are</u> you (Abubakar) sketching the map? |
| | ▪ <u>am</u> I (Aliyu) teaching you English? |
| | ▪ <u>is</u> your dog barking? |

▪ Present continuous tense for the future

Present continuous tense is also talking about the future if **future word** adds to the statement such as: **tomorrow, next week, after Eid, in Ramadan, tonight** etc., examples:

- *I am travelling by air tomorrow*
- *She is cooking food tonight*
- *We are taking exam next week*

iii. PRESENT PERFECT TENSE

It is a form of verb that suggests that an action has been completed, formed in English by preceding the verb with "have" or "has" (for third person singular) and usually ending the verb with "-ed," e.g. "have departed". The present perfect combines *present tense* with *perfect aspect*, denoting the present state of an action's being completed, that is, that the action took place before the present time.

▪ How do we make the Present Perfect Tense?

Present perfect tense forms with present tense of auxiliary **have** (namely **have** and **has**) and the **past participle** of the **main verb**:

<i>subject</i>	+	<i>auxiliary verb</i>	+	<i>main verb</i>
<i>noun/pro</i>		<i>have / has</i>		<i>past participle</i>

POSITIVE STATEMENT

<i>Subject</i>	<i>auxiliary</i>	<i>main verb</i>	
I, you, we, they	have	read	for exam
he, she, it	has	eaten	the food

NEGATIVE STATEMENT

<i>Subject</i>	<i>auxiliary</i>	<i>main verb</i>	
I, you, we, they	have	not played	the game
he, she, it	has	not been	in class

INTERROGATIVE STATEMENT

<i>auxiliary</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>main verb</i>	
have	I, you, we, they	finished	the note?
has	he, she, it	gone	To the farm?

▪ Contractions with the Present Perfect Tense

When we use the present perfect tense, we can contract the subject and auxiliary verb in speaking or in writing as:

I have	I've
he/she has	he's/she's

we have	we've
you have	you've

it has	it's
they have	they've

▪ Present perfect tense for experience

Use to know whether action did/does or not, as for examples:

- *I have got marriage*
- *He has not arrested by police*
- *Has the price gone up?*

▪ Present perfect tense for change

Use to talk about change or new information, as for examples:

- *I have lived in Hadejia*
- *She has studied at Aminu Yusuf*
- *We have never visited him*

▪ Present perfect tense for continuing situation: *Used to talk about action started in the past and continuous in the present:*

- *We have waited since morning*
- *Khadija has been ill for 2 weeks*
- *How long have you known Maryam?*

▪ 'For' and 'since' with Present Perfect Tense

FOR	SINCE
30 minutes	7:30am
7 days	Monday

FOR	SINCE
5 months	January
2 years	2015

Examples

- *I have been here for 30 minute*
- *They have been here since 30 past 7*
- *She has been ill for 2 years*
- *He has been ill since 2015*

iv. PRESENT PERFECT CONTINUOUS TENSE

The present perfect continuous combines perfect aspect with present tense, that is, it expresses an action continuing up to now or action that has just stopped or recently stopped.

HOW DO WE MAKE THE PRESENT PERFECT CONT. TENSE?

Present perfect continuous tense forms with the present of **have** (and **has** for 3rd person singular) and the **past participle** of **be** (**been**) and the **present participle** of the **main verb** (**-ing** form):

subject + auxiliary verb + auxiliary verb + main verb

noun/pro have/has been present participle

POSITIVE STATEMENT ()

<i>subject</i>	<i>perfective</i>	<i>progressive</i>	<i>main verb</i>	
I, you, we, they	have	been	writing	since morning
he, she, it	has	been	eating	too much

NEGATIVE STATEMENT (-)

<i>subject</i>	<i>perfective</i>	<i>progressive</i>	<i>main verb</i>	
I, you, we, they	have	been	not studying	here
he, she	has	been	not writing	an exam
it	has	been	not raining	till now

INTERROGATIVE STATEMENT (?)

<i>auxiliary</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>auxiliary</i>	<i>main verb</i>	
have	you, they	been	seeing	my books?
have	I	been	playing	the game?
has	he, she, it	been	sitting	In the garden?

▪ Contractions with the Present-PCT

When we use the present perfect continues tense, we can contract the subject and auxiliary verb in speaking or in writing as:

I have been	I've been
he has been	he's been
it has been	it's been

we have been	we've been
you have been	you've been
they have been	they've been

▪ **Present-PCT for an action that has recently stopped**

Use to know whether action started in the past and stopped recently. Examples:

- She is smiled, because she have been wedding
- You don't understand, because you haven't been listening
 - Why is it wet, has it been raining?
 - I am tired, because I have been working

▪ **Present-PCT for an action continuing up to now**

Use to talk about an action that started in the past and is continuing now by using with 'for' or 'since', e.g.:

- I have been typing since 30 minutes
- He has been watching sport since morning
- She hasn't been calling me since last week
- They haven't been reading their books, since
- How long have you been learning Grammar?
- Since when it has been leaking?

d. PAST TENSE

- i. **SIMPLE**
- ii. **CONTINUES**
- iii. **PERFECT**
- iv. **PERFECT CONTINUES**

e. FUTURE TENSE

- i. **SIMPLE**
- ii. **CONTINUES**
- iii. **PERFECT**
- iv. **PERFECT CONTINUES**

v.

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